

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
BRIEFING SESSION
19 November 1975

AM

9:30 CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

ADMINISTRATION

- A. Fiscal Year 1977 Budget - Report of Review by Office of Management and Budget.
- B. Mall Lighting - Status Report.
- C. Report on 1-130, D.C. Council Delay in Demolition Legislation.
- D. Federal Advisory Committees Act - Status Report.
- E. Alignment of 6th Street at Mall - Report.

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10:00 CONVENE, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

ADMINISTRATION

- A. Dates of next meetings: 17 December, 1975
21 January, 1976.
- B. Minutes of October, 1975 Meeting.

SUBMISSIONS--REVIEWS

A. General Services Administration

1. Relocation of Government Printing Office, Environmental Impact Statement.

2. Federal Design Review Policy - Draft.

B. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation

Architectural Studies of Square 226, Pershing Memorial Site, 15th & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

C. National Park Service, National Capital Parks

Energy Resources Exhibit, Mall at 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.

D. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

1. Federal City College Master Plan - Architectural Control of Boundaries.

2. Perry-Simmons Elementary School Replacement, 1st Street between H & I Streets, N.W. - Model.

E. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

Old Georgetown Act

Appendix 1.

Shipstead-Luce Act

Appendix 2.

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F. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Federal Triangle Station, New Carrollton Line, 12th
Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. - Revised Designs.

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS MAY 17, 1910

J. CARTER BROWN, Chairman

NICOLAS ARROYO

CHLOETHIFL WOODARD SMITH

JANE O. DART

EDWARD STONE, JR.

KEVIN ROCHE

GEORGE WEYMOUTH

CHARLES H. ATHERTON, Secretary

708 JACKSON PLACE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006
202-343-5324

29 December, 1975

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

There will be a meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on Tuesday, January 27, 1976 at the Commission offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. The Commission will meet first in executive session at 9:30, followed by a business session at 10:30 a.m.

Some projects expected on the agenda are:

Design Studies for Pennsylvania Avenue between
13th & 15th Streets, N.W. and Pershing Memorial
Site.

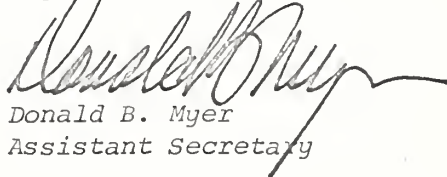
Mall Graphics for the Smithsonian Institution.

Restoration Plans for the Winder Building.

Proposed Office/Hotel/Commercial Development
at 3000 M Street, N.W.

"Streets for People" Pay Telephone Booths.

Signed,



Donald B. Myer
Assistant Secretary

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
19 November, 1975

The meeting convened at 9:30 a.m. in the Commission of Fine Arts offices at 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Members Present:

Hon. J. Carter Brown, Chairman
Hon. Kevin Roche
Hon. Chloethiel Woodard Smith
Hon. George A. Weymouth

Staff Present:

Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Secretary
Mr. Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary
Mr. Jeffrey R. Carson
Mr. J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr.
Mrs. Sue A. Kohler
Mrs. Nancy N. Lusher
Mr. David L. Miller

National Capital Planning

Commission Staff Present: Mr. Robert Gresham

Also Present were: Messers Heron and Eisenwein, House District Committee; Ms. Betts Abel, Don't Tear It Down; Mr. Ford, Environmental Protection Agency; a representative of the National Endowment for the Arts.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Fiscal Year 1977 Budget - Report of Review by the Office of Management and Budget. The Secretary reported that the Commission's requested budget had been granted with the removal of two thousand dollars, making the total for FY 1977 \$208,000. This reduction was generally something that the Commission could live with, but the suggestion had been made verbally by the OMB representative, Mr. James Robinson, that the Commission dismiss its legal counsel and rely on borrowing counsel from other government agencies as needed. The Secretary stated that this suggestion was being appealed since the Commission requires speed, continuity, and impartiality from its legal advisor and there is little likelihood of obtaining this level of service from available unoccupied lawyers within agencies which the Commission may well have cases pending. The members agreed that the suggestion should be appealed.

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B. *Mall Lighting, Status Report.* The Secretary reported that the coordinating committee formed to guide interagency Mall lighting had met since the October Commission meeting. The group had resolved its differences with the suggestion that a non-luminaire-topped pole be used within the Mall grass panels where needed for traffic reasons. All light poles would be located outside the panels in all jurisdictions. The members unanimously approved this.

The Secretary also reported that the D.C. Department of Transportation had decided that because of a lack of funds it would add no lights to the Mall on the cross streets at this time. He reported that the National Park Service was equally unable to add lamps to the Mall, so that they would complete the east-west lamping with "Olmsted lamps" and do no more at this time. The type of illumination would be determined during tests by the Park Service of incandescent and color-corrected mercury vapor luminaires. The Commission found this a slow sane approach to the problem of Mall lighting. Doing a little at a time would give the opportunity to assess the effects of each change.

Exhibit A.

C. *Report on i-i30, D.C. City Council Delay in Demolition Legislation.* The Assistant Secretary told the Commission that he and the Secretary had participated in discussions with the City Council Committee on Housing. The bill in question was one which would add a review phase to all building permit requests for demolition of historic structures or housing units. The process complexity and bureaucratic overlay could be a strong deterrent to potential investors and builders in the District of Columbia. Further the potential legislation would have the effect of punishing rather than constructively guiding the private sector of the building and housing industry. The Mayor's Offices of Housing, Preservation, and Planning had all recommended against the bill suggesting that they would have positive plans for the housing, planning, and preservation in the near future. The Chairman of the City Council had tabled the bill pending presentation of these plans.

The Assistant Secretary told the members that they would be kept informed of developments on this front and that they would be called upon to have an input to City policy through liason or public hearing procedures in the future. The Commission concurred with this activity.

D. *Federal Advisory Committees Act, Status Report.* The Secretary reported that he and the Commission's legal advisor, Dapray Muir, had met with high level staff members at the Office of Management and

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Budget and had determined that there were ways of having executive session within the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committees Act. The Commission agreed that they would at times need to deliberate in closed session on occasions to protect property, reputation, or confidentiality when sensitive advice had to be given to other agencies or when that advice had to be reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget before being released. The sense of the Commission, however, was that most of the meetings would be held in public session.

E. Alignment of 6th Street at Mall - Report. The Assistant Secretary told of letters received from Mr. Jack Fish of the National Capital Region of the Park Service and Mr. David Childs of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill concerning compensation for the misalignment of the crossing between the central Mall entrances of the National Gallery of Art and the Air and Space Museum. The apparent misalignment was being compensated for as Sixth Street was being removed and replaced by a pedestrian walk. Since the new alignment running from centerline would crowd existing trees a bit the Chairman suggested tree trimming as a palliative until the life cycle of the trees made replacement possible. The Commission concurred with this solution.

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS (Public Session)

A. Dates of next meetings were set at 17 December, 1975 and 21 January, 1976, at 9:30 a.m.

B. Minutes of October 1975 meeting, approved.

III. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS (Public Session)

A. General Services Administration

1. Relocation of Government Printing Office, Environmental Impact Statement. The Assistant Secretary showed the members an environmental impact statement indicating that the staff had reviewed it and would be glad to summarize the Commission's concerns in the document. The members agreed and the following report was given: For a number of years the GPO had endeavored to relocate and consolidate its operations to permit a horizontal operation more consistent with modern printing techniques. As the largest single blue collar employer in the District of Columbia there was very strong feeling to avoid any relocation outside the District of Columbia. A new site within the District in the Brightwood area would provide access by subway and railroad for personnel and paper products. An already industrial area would provide a totally adequate and suitable site. Visibility

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of the facility from major city entrances would come under jurisdiction of the Commission of Fine Arts.

The old site of GPO on North Capitol Street would be abandoned for the printing operation. The mid-nineteenth century complex was being recommended by GSA for retention and adaptive re-use. Since the adjacent hotel, visitor, and office uses of this renewed portion of the city were inconsistent with industrial use, government offices would probably end up inside the existing buildings. The members stated that the existing buildings had a rugged design integrity worthy of a re-use exploration.

The Commission unanimously approved the concept of relocating the Government Printing Office. They felt it important to comment on the necessity of design review for the new facility and were in favor of retention of the existing buildings.

2. Federal Design Review Policy - Draft. The Secretary referred to a booklet which had been circulated by mail to the members. In it was a draft Executive Order by which the President would create a set of criteria for examining all government building projects. Overseeing this set of conditions would be an advisory body consisting of various cabinet officers and representatives of the construction industry, planning and architectural professions, etc. The Secretary pointed out that the document was unduly complicated and in some respects duplicated existing programs by having parallel organization within the General Services Administration.

The Secretary reviewed the other Presidential proclamations and executive orders dealing with design and artistic excellence. The members agreed that there was an area of legitimate concern in government design, conservation, and resource utilization, but the proposal was unduly complicated and added a layer of government where none was needed. The Commission unanimously disapproved the document.

EXHIBIT B

B. Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation

Architectural Studies of Square 226, Pershing Memorial Site, 15th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. The project was represented by Messers Woodbridge and Moon of the PADC, and their consultant Mr. Paumier. Col. Frederick Badger represented the Battle Monuments Commission.

The Assistant Secretary told the members that the Pennsylvania

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Avenue Development Corporation had submitted a set of alternative schemes for landscaping a plaza bounded by 14th, 15th, and E Streets and reaching the facades of the Willard and Washington hotels. The site included the right-of-way of Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. between 14th and 15th Streets and Square 226. The studies had been prepared by PADC in consultation with the Battle Monuments Commission.

The Commission's previous action had been to disapprove a scheme for the Pershing Memorial in late summer suggesting that it had too much paving and that if the memorial were to be located on this site it would be better treated as an element inside a park. During the Commission's September 1975 meeting the staff had made a presentation on the historical development of the area between 13th Street and 15th Street, pointing out that the problem with the PADC and Pershing Memorial schemes had been irresolution of the sequence of spaces between 13th Street and the White House grounds. Historically a plaza had been located a block east of the PADC schemes first for the National Square and then for the Pershing Memorial. Key to an excellent design development in the area would be the reopening of the issue of closing Pennsylvania Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets. The staff recommendation was that more existing elements in the area should be retained and developed rather than written off for a new scheme - one which had never been approved by the Commission of Fine Arts. Deemphasizing automobile traffic along E Street by keeping Pennsylvania Avenue open seemed to be the best possibility to provide a framework for good urban design. The Commission concurred with the staff recommendations and asked that the staff discuss their ideas with other agencies and interested parties. The staff had done this and received enthusiastic, positive responses from all directions save the Director of the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, who was cool to any change in the design.

Messers Woodbridge and Paumier presented their alternative designs. All had large grass areas and large trees as their main elements. A small statue and pool would comprise the Pershing Memorial. A right-of-way of Pennsylvania Avenue would be visually open with a large fountain on the avenue axis.

If such a scheme were pursued the Chairman stated his personal preference for a scheme with a circular grass element. Mr. Roche suggested that even that scheme had too much paving and that additional trees could be considered on the Pennsylvania Avenue right-of-way to soften the plaza without unduly blocking the vista of the Treasury Building facade.

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The Commission also asked that the issue of closing Pennsylvania Avenue be opened and explored through additional study along with the space south of the Treasury and the square between 13th and 14th Streets. Mr. Woodbridge stated that he was willing to rethink the issue, but that for over 13 years he had been studying the traffic requirements in the vicinity and had been convinced that closing Pennsylvania Avenue and giving E Street a diagonal priority route between 13th and 14th Streets was best. Mrs. Smith pointed out that traffic and highway thinking was changing very fast in favor of urban amenities and balanced transportation.

The Commission unanimously agreed that the area should be restudied.

EXHIBIT C

C. National Park Service, National Capital Parks

Energy Resources Exhibit, Mall at 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W. The project was represented by Mr. John Parsons of the Park Service and representatives from the consultants, Cambridge Seven.

The Secretary presented drawings and a model of a series of canvas-topped pole structure modules linked together in a low airy way with several wind mills and solar collectors. He stated that the exhibit would be located at the base of Capitol Hill for the summer of 1976 only. Mr. Weymouth asked if there was some type of guarantee that the exhibit would be removed. The Secretary said that it was not only guaranteed by the Park Service, but the site was designated for a new Smithsonian museum in the future.

Mr. Parsons introduced his consultants and their steering committee. After some general discussion, the Commission unanimously approved the design.

EXHIBIT D

D. D.C. Government, Department of General Services

1. Federal City College Master Plan, Architectural Control of Boundaries. The project was represented by Mr. Charles Pavlick and consultants.

The Assistant Secretary presented a series of drawings depicting a site north of the Mount Vernon Square in Northwest Washington. The four block square would be developed into a structured campus along the 8th Street pedestrian spine running through this part of the city all the way from the Hirshhorn Museum. He pointed out that previous

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efforts at designating this area part of the Shipstead-Luce area to give major government investments Fine Arts Commission protection had not been successful, but that issue would be appropriate at this time. Some excellent examples of 19th century commercial frontage still existed along 7th Street next to the campus and one of the traditional difficulties with all urban campuses was the deterioration normal at their edges. Though the campus plan protected and developed what would occur within the campus there was no architectural control across the street. This could be a problem for both the campus and the community.

Mr. Pavlick introduced his consultants who described their scheme as a use and building location plan without specific architectural details. Separate architects would be retained under an executive architect to develop the exact designs, which would then be reviewed by the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Roche asked for additional clarification about the difference between a master plan which represents a building bulk and a preliminary design for that building. There was no satisfactory answer to that question. It was suggested that review of the master plan by the National Capital Planning Commission could help define the separation between building design and master plan.

The Commission avoided any comment on the proposed architectural character of the campus. They did unanimously approve the master plan which consisted of four structures placed symmetrically about the 8th Street axis.

EXHIBIT E

E. D.C. Government, Department of Economic Development

Old Georgetown Act

Appendix 1, approved.

Shipstead-Luce Act

Appendix 2, approved.

F. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

Elevator Kiosk, 12th Street between Constitution Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. The project was represented by Mr. Sprague Thresher of WMATA.

The Assistant Secretary presented drawings and a model of this

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elevator for the handicapped leading from the Federal Triangle to a subway station below. He pointed out that the design was for a temporary facility, and that the eventual location would be within an adjacent building (either the Old Post Office or the completed IRS Building). Since there was no resolution of the final development of this area and the elevator was required for operation of the subway on its completion, a temporary solution was needed. The kiosk was being consolidated within these buildings eventually at the suggestion of the Commission. The kiosk had been reduced in height by 18 inches also at the suggestion of the Commission. The Commission unanimously, if unenthusiastically, approved the facility as a temporary one.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Charles H. Atherton".

Charles H. Atherton
Secretary

